7. "Jihad is **terrorism**"

The essence of Jihad is to struggle and sacrifice for one's religion in a manner which is pleasing to God. Linguistically, it means to "struggle" and can refer to one's striving to do good deeds, give charity, or to join an Islamic military action.

Human beings have fought throughout ages ; this is evident from recorded history, irrespective of religion, nationality and beliefs.

Islam came as a mercy to mankind in order to regulate human affairs like war and maintain a benign balance.

The most commonly known form is the military Jihad which is permitted in order to preserve the well being of society, to prevent oppression from spreading, and to promote justice. It regulates the human affairs and helps in maintaining a balance. This can either be defensive or offensive, depending on the circumstance.

8. "Muslims **worship** Muhammad"

Islam teaches Muslims to respect all of God's Prophets and Messengers – but respecting and loving them does not mean worshipping them.

Yet another misconception is that Muslims worship Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is entirely untrue, and is easily refuted by the actual saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): **"Do not over-praise me as the Christians over-praised Jesus, the son of Mary. I am His slave, so refer to me as 'God's slave and Messenger.' "**

9. "Muslims are **cruel** to animals"

Islam came as a religion of compassion and mercy to not only humans but the entire universe. This is asserted in the Quran. The final messenger of God [Muhammad (peace be upon him)] was sent as a mercy for the worlds (Quran 21:107).

Muhammad (peace be upon him) commanded the Muslims to be kind and gentle for gentleness in anything brings good. He taught his followers to **"Be kind to the ones on Earth so that the one in heaven may be kind to you."** The believers are commanded not to tire the animals or overburden an animal. Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught that **"a reward is given to humans in connection to every living creature"**.

Muslims are taught to be kind even in the face of complicated affairs like war, not only to women and children but also to plant and animals. Muslims belive that they will be rewarded for their kindness by God, as is evident from the anecdote found in a hadith of the adulteress who was forgiven by God for a small act of kindness that she showed to a dog. Likewise, Muslims believe they will be punished for their harsh behaviour towards animals, as is evident from another anecdote found in the Prophetic tradition where a woman was punished for not taking care of a cat and leaving it to starve.

In terms of what Muslims eat, this is addressed in various verses of the Quran. One verse speaks, **"They ask you, [O Muhammad], what has been made lawful for them. Say, 'Lawful for you are [all] good foods and [game caught by] what you have trained of hunting animals which you train as Allah has taught you. So eat of what they catch for you, and mention the name of Allah upon it, and fear Allah.' Indeed, Allah is swift in account."** Quran 5:4

In terms of various researches as we know now have proven that even plants have life and feel pain. So just saying that having non-vegetarian food is barbaric is logically and scientifically inaccurate, because then even a vegetarian diet would be barbaric. What Muslims consider as lawful or unlawful isn't defined by what the variable human emotion and understanding, but by God's Divine Revelation and His Wisdom

conclusion

Learning about Islam from unqualified sources without verification is dangerous and leads to misunderstandings. Do not be misled into accepting misconceptions and false information about Islam – the belief shared by more than a quarter of mankind.

Does not the guidance for all humanity, the message of Islam, deserve to be carefully pondered over and reflected on?

v2.00

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misconceptions about Islam?

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introduction

Islam is one of the world's largest religions yet it is also one of the most misunderstood. For various reasons - be they political, economic, biased media or fear of the "other" - mistruths and misconceptions have been spread about Islam. The key to understanding Islam and Muslims is to resist stereotypes and examine each situation according to Islamic teachings and authentic sources?

1. "Muslims do not share **good & noble values** with non-Muslims"

"The best among you are those who have the best manners and character." Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

Some people allege that Islamic values are somehow incompatible with decent "Indian" values. Such claims could not be further from the truth.

Muslims cherish noble and universal values such as:

- being honest and just
- keeping one's word
- allowing freedom of religion
- respecting parents, relatives, neighours, and the elderly
- being charitable, generous, and looking after the poor and needy
- **not** lying, cheating, swearing or backbiting anyone

Muslims are required to contribute positively towards society and to always conduct themselves with the highest of morals and best of actions.

2. "Muslims worship a **new** god called **Allah**"

The teaching of God's complete Oneness is the essence of Islam. It is the purest form of monotheism.

The word "Allah" is simply the Arabic word for The Almighty God – an Arabic word of rich meaning, denoting the one and only God.

Muslims believe that God alone is The Creator, The Cherisher and The Sustainer of the universe and all between it, without any need from it or for it. Many Non-Muslims also acknowledge this. Apart from this, Muslims also believe that God alone is worthy of worship and worship of any object or part of this worldly creation is idolatry.

3. "Islam permits **terrorism**"

The media generally portrays any Muslim who fights as a terrorist, regardless of whether they fight justly or unjustly, or whether they are oppressing others or being oppressed.

In war, the targeting of innocent non-combatants is a despicable act which Islam clearly prohibits. In fact, Muslims are not allowed to destroy plants and animals unnecessarily, let alone innocent humans. However, it is important to distinguish between terrorism and legitimate resistance to occupation, as the two are very different.

The Quran clearly demonstrates the seriousness of killing an innocent person, and emphasises the value of human life:

"If anyone murders an innocent person, it will be as if he has murdered the whole of humanity. And if anyone saves a person it will be as if he has saved the whole of humanity."
Quran 5:32

4. "Islam **oppresses** women"

In Islam, men and women are viewed as equals before God, in terms of both receiving equal reward and accountability for their actions. The only thing that distinguishes people in the sight of God is their level of piety.

"Verily the most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is the most God conscious." - Quran 49:13

This verse proves that real honour and status is not attained because a person is rich or poor, black or white, male or female, but attained through piety and devoutness.

Allah, the Creator of both genders, has assigned different roles and responsibilities for each, taking into account their differences.

Women are given the utmost respect and honour, such as the right to equal pay, choice of spouse, pursuit of education, and the right to divorce and inheritance.

Unfortunately, there are some Muslim women who are oppressed and not given their rights. This is not the fault of Islam. The problem is that in some countries, people follow certain cultural practices and traditions which have nothing to do with Islam.

5. "The **Quran** is just another **religious** book"

Muslims acknowledge that there were many many Prophets sent at different parts of the world with different Revelations which were for the people of that particular area for that particular time. For example, Muslims believe in Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) as a Messenger of God who came with the revelation "Injeel" or "The Gospel". Muslims also believe that the Quran is the Final Revelation sent for all of mankind.The Quran is the divine literal word of God Almighty, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), through the angel Gabriel. It is a criterion for the truth, containing guidance for humanity to live by.

For more info on this topic: http://www.theinimitablequran.com

Also the Quran presents several falsification tests in order to confirm its divine origin. God gives a challenge to the people:

"If you are in doubt of what We have revealed to Our messenger, then produce one chapter like it. Call upon all your helpers, besides Allah, if you are truthful." Qur'an Chapter 2 Verse 23.

This fact alludes to it being not like any other "religious book"..

6. "Hijab (Burqa) is **oppressive**"

To observe the hijab, Muslim women are required to modestly cover their body with clothes that do not reveal their figure in front of non-closely related males. However, hijab is not just about outer appearances; it is also about noble speech, modesty, and dignified conduct.

Although there are many benefits of the hijab, the key reason Muslim women observe hijab is because it is a command from Allah (God), and He knows what is best for His creation.

The hijab empowers a woman by emphasising her inner spiritual beauty, rather than her superficial appearance. It gives women the freedom to be active members of society, while maintaining their modesty.

The hijab does not symbolize suppression, oppression or silence. Rather, it is a guard against degrading remarks, unwanted advances and unfair discrimination. So the next time you see a Muslim woman, know that she covers her physical appearance, not her mind or intellect.